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Samskara (Karana) as a process, its types & effect on Dravya : Review

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ABSTRACT

Health as well as diseases is dependent on various factors. According to *Acharya Charak*, the body is supported by three sub-pillars known as *Tri Upstambha* (*Ahara*, *Nidra*, and *Brahmacarya*). *Ahara* has been placed first in this statement, which shows that it is most important to maintain the life. Everyone desires a blanched diet. *Ahara* is responsible factor for human beings, in health and diseased state. *Ahara* is not only needed for the continuity of life, but also for *Bala*, *Varna*, *Upacaya* and longevity etc. In other medical sciences, food is considered important, but not the manner of eating and cooking. *Ahara* is a basic need for survival of life. For intake of *Ahara*, *Ayurved* has enlisted some special conditions which need to be followed to obtain complete benefits of the food. They are called as *Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatan*. In which *Karana* is the processing of the substances which result in transformation of the inherent attributes in *Dravya*. In this article we will discuss the *Samskara* as a *Karana* among *Ashta Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana* for maintenance of healthy life as well as management of disease.

Key words: *Upastambha*, *Ahara*, *Ashta Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana*, *Karana*.

INTRODUCTION

Ahara is the most important factor in life. Health as well as disease is dependent on *Ahara*. Proper diet, taken in proper manner can lead to better health or else can lead to disease. So, *Acarya Charaka* has given the concept of *Ashta Ahara Vidhi Visheshaayatana* in *Vimana Sthana*, like *Prakriti* (nature of substance), *Karana* (processing of substances), *Samyoga* (combination of different substances), *Rashi* (quantum

of substances), *Desha* (habitat of substances), *Kala* (Time, Age, seasons, condition), *Upyoga Samstha* (dietetic rules), *Upyokta* (Habit of individual).^[1] Here we discuss the concept of *Karana* as a *Samskara* in detail.

Karana is the processing of the substances which result in transformation of the inherent attributes in *Dravya*. These properties are imparted by contact of water and fire; by cleansing, churning, place, time, infusing, steeping, etc. and also by the medium used for storage or preparing it (e.g., copper vessel, or earthen pot), etc.^[2]

The term 'processing' includes techniques of preparation and cooking fresh food. The food preparation techniques can modify properties of food substances.

Before the term "*Samskara*" was developed, the *Samskara* process already existed. There are references going from *Vedika Kala* that show the many *samskaras* used in the preparation process. One of the well known examples of a *Samskara* that includes

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Kuttana, Peshana and *Nishpidana*. *Samskara* is the word used most frequently in *Samhitakala* for a variety of procedures; including *Swedana, Mardana, Bhavana* and *Manthana* among others. All references to *Samskara* in *Rasasastra* and *Bhaisajya Kalapana* point towards different methods of processing or preparation. In *Charaka Samhita*, after quoting the definition of *Samskara* from the earliest ayurvedic book, a list of many techniques helpful to creating *Gunantaradhana* is provided.^[2]

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To study the effect of *Samskara Karma* on *Dravya*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The *Ayurvedic* classics were analysed in detail regarding the references for *Samskara* and its effect on *Dravya* from *Ayurvedic* texts used in this study are *Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya, Ashtanga Sangraha, Tarka Sangraha* and relevant articles.

DISCUSSION

Types

In *Brihatrayi, Samskara's* direct types are not listed. *Vaisesika Darsana* provides a precise reference for types that can be understood from an *Ayurvedic* perspective.

Three types of *Samskara* are as follows in *Tarka Sangraha*^[3]

1. Vegakhya Samskara

Situated in *Prthvi, Apa, Teja, Vayu* and *Mind* i.e., *Prthvivyadi, Catustayamanovrtti*.

2. Sthiti Sthapaka Samskara

The *Guna* responsible for gaining the previous *Avastha*, after *Avastha* has been changed by some external source. It is situated in *Katadiprthvi* i.e., *Katadi Prthvi Vrtti*. It is a Cause for *Syandana*.

3. Bhavnakhya Samskara

As an impression or impregnation on mind, causative factor for memory, situated in soul (*Atma*) i.e., *Atmamatravrtti*.

Then we let see the different processes mentioned in *Charaka Samhita*, which could also be considered as types of *Samskara*.

So, analyse the many procedures listed in the *Charaka Samhita*; which could also be considered as types of *Samskara*.^[2]

- Toya Sannikarsha*
- Agni Sannikarsha*
- Shauca*
- Manthana*
- Desha*
- Kala*
- Vasana*
- Bhavanadi* (by *Adi* all processes namely *Paka, Dhavana, Nimajjana, Avapana, Nirvapana, Patana, Soshana, Sincana, Sthapana, Mardana* can be considered.)
- Kala Prakarsha*
- Bhajana etc.*

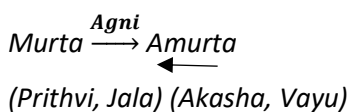
In this classification, it is important to note that, first preference is given to *Toyaagni Sannikarsha*. The cause can be understood by reviewing basic *Siddhanta* of *Pancamahabhutas*. At the level of *Pancamahabhutas, Prithvi* is an *Adhara* for all the processes of *Samyoga-Vibhaga* and *Akasha* is providing space for those remaining three *Mahabhutas*; namely *Jala, Agni* and *Vayu* are responsible for transformations or changes taking place in a substance.

In the process of evolution of *Mahabhutas*, sequence of evolution is:^[4]

Akasha → Vayu → Agni → Jala → Prithvi

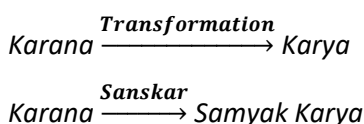
Here *Agni Mahabhuta* is having its place right in the middle, showing its significant role in the transformation of *Mahabhutas*. So, in any *Pancabhautika* substance also, continuous changes or transformations are taking place due to presence of *Agni Mahabhuta* in it. But the rate of transformation may differ according to quantity of *Agni Mahabhuta* present in it and other helpful conditions.

By providing *Agni* from outside, one can increase the rate of transformation. Therefore, *Agni Mahabhuta* plays a key role.



When it comes to this transformation, *Vayu* and *Jala* are supporting or useful *Mahabhutas*. Transformation varies from *Samskara* in that it can occur in any way and result in any *Dravya*. However, *Samskara* is transforming in a proper manner by creating the necessary conditions in order to obtain the desired outcome.

As *Karana Karyavada* (cause and effect relationship) is a widely accepted *Siddhanta* in *Ayurvedic* texts, *Karana* can change into any *Karya*. However, "*Samyak Karyotpatti*" refers to the process as *Samskara* when it is creatively carried out in a proper manner.



Therefore, *Samskara* as a process can be broadly categorised under the following three headings.

1. *Toya Sannikarsha*
2. *Agni Sannikarsha*
3. *Toya Agni Sannikarsha*

SN	<i>Toya Sannikarsha</i>	<i>Agni Sannikarsha</i>	<i>Toya Agnisannikarsha</i>
1.	<i>Sauca</i>	<i>Desa</i>	<i>Manthana</i>
2.	<i>Dhavana</i>	<i>Kala</i>	<i>Bhavana</i>
3.	<i>Nimajjana</i>	<i>Paka</i>	<i>Nirvapana</i>
4.	<i>Sincana</i> etc.	<i>Daha</i>	<i>Pesana</i>
5.		<i>Mardana</i>	<i>Svedana</i> etc.
6.		<i>Sosana</i> etc.	

1) *Toya Sannikarsha*

- In *Sauca* is cleansing with water, so it is considered under *Toya Sannikarsha*.

- In *Dhavana* instead of water, different medicated decoctions are also used, which are *Jala Mahabhuta* dominant, so considered under *Toya Sannikarsa*.
- In *Nimajjana*, a substance is placed in specific decoction or liquid medium for specific time.

In all the above processes, one factor is common i.e., use of *Jala Mahabhuta* dominant *Dravya*. *Prithvi* dominant impurities and impurities which are soluble in water get removed due to this. According to *Pancamahabhuta Siddhanta*, to make changes in *Parthiva Dravya*, *Jala Mahabhuta* is required to soften the hardness present in *Parthiva Dravyas*. Also, *Jala Mahabhuta* penetrates into *Parthiva Dravya* and loosens the molecular bonding, thereby accumulating space present in between molecules. As the sequence of evolution is from *Akasha* to *Prithvi*, the sequence of dissolution is reversing i.e., *Prithvi, Jala, Agni, Vayu, Akasha*. So as the *Prithvi* gets dissolved into *Jala Mahabhuta*, *Jala Mahabhuta* dominant *Dravyas* are used in the above processes.

2) *Agni Sannikarsha*

- *Desha Samskara* implies putting specific *Dravya* (eg. *Asava, Arista* etc), in a specific place i.e., beneath *Bhasma Rashi, Dhanya Rashi* etc. Purpose of putting the *Dravya* in particular place is to maintain controlled temperature or heat pattern which is required for formation of end product. In this way, this can be included in *Agni Sannikarsha*.
- *Kala Prakarsha* implies putting a *Dravya* for specific time, required to enhance maximum potential of end product. Again, example given is *Asava Arista* etc. which are generally kept in a controlled temperature condition for nearly 15 days of time.
- *Mardana, Soshana, Paka* etc. can be clearly considered under *Agni Sannikarsha*, though the amount of *Agni* required for the above said processes is in the increasing order respectively. As *Mardanajanya Agni* is produced which is in less amount but for longer duration in process of *Mardana*; while in *Paka*, more amount of *Agni* is given directly, may be for shorter or longer duration as per requirement.

3) Toyaagnisannikarsha

Maximum number of processes requires *Toya* and *Agni Sanikarsha*, both to carry out transformation.

- In *Manthana* process, Water is added to *Dadhi* and it is then churned by a Churner. In this process of churning also, a specific amount of *Agni* gets produced which is required to increase *Laghutva*, *Shothaghna* properties forming new product *Takra*.
- In *Nirvapana*, firstly the substance is heated (*Agnisanikarsha*) and then is dipped in specific decoctions, oil or *Kanji* etc. (*Toyasannikarsha*).
- In *Peshana* process can be considered under *Toyaagnisannikarsha*, as while doing *Peshana* with *Jala*, some amount of *Agni* is also produced due to friction.
- In *Svedana* process, clearly *Toyaagni Sannikarsa* is there.

Ashtanga Sangraha had given good contribution by mentioning Various examples of *Samskara* collected at one place i.e., in *Sutra Sthana*. *Indu* again has contributed well by classifying these examples under different headings which are as under:^[5]

1. *Samskara Vishesha*
2. *Svabhava Vishesha*
3. *Samskara Svabhava*
4. *Avastha Vishesha*
5. *Patra Vishesha*
6. *Kriya Vishesha*
7. *Kriya Svabhava Vishesha*
8. *Kriya Proyoga Vishesha*
9. *Kriya Samyoga Vishesha*
10. *Samyoga Samskara Vishesha*
11. *Samskara Kala Vishesha*

1) Samskara Vishesha

(a) *Ardraka* $\xrightarrow[\text{Dried in Sunlight}]{\text{Dipped in lime water}}$ *Sunthi*
(*Toyaagnisannikarsa*)

(*Guru*) (*Laghu*)

Here *Ardraka* before and after dipping in lime water dried in sunlight. So, *Jala Mahabhuta* dominance gets decreased and *Agni Mahabhuta* dominance increased comparatively, so that *Ardraka* having *Guru Guna* is converted into *Sunthi* having *Laghu Guna*.

(b) *Saktu* → *Siddha Pindika* (*Toyaagnisannikarsa*)

Here *Saktu* is *Svabhava laghu*, but when *Pindika* is made from it, it becomes *guru*.

(c) *Vrihi* → *Laja*

Here *Vrihi* which is *Guru* and *Pittakara*, after *Samskara* becomes *Laghu* and *Pittahara*.

(d) *Mudga* $\xrightarrow{\text{Alpa swedana}}$ *Kulmasha* (*Toyaagni Sannikarsha*)

Here *Mudga* which is *Laghu* and *Samgrahaka* by nature is transformed to *Kulmasha*, which are *Guru* and *Bhedi* after *Alpa Svedana*. Here also *Toyaagni Sannikarsha* is there. But *Alpa* word is indicative of *Agni Mahabhuta* used is less, as compared to *Jala Mahabhuta*. Also, *Vayu Mahabhuta* which is dominant in *Mudga* responsible for *Samgrahana Svabhava* and *Laghu Guna* get decreased after *Alpasvedana*.

(e) *Aam Takra* $\xrightarrow{\text{Agni Samskar}}$ *Pakwa Takra* (*Agni Sannikarsha*)

Here also, *Ama Takra* which is *Ati Samgrahana* get converted into *Pakwa Takra* after *Agni Samskara* which is *Kincita Samgrahanam*. Here, *Vayu Mahabhuta* responsible for *Shoshana* activity in *Ama Takra* get decreased and *Agni Mahabhuta* is increased comparatively, due to *Agni Samskara*.

(f) *Ama Mulakam* $\xrightarrow{\text{Agni Samskar}}$ *Pakwa Mulakam*

Here *Ama Mulaka* which is *Tridoshakar* becomes *Adoshala* after *Agni Samskara* on it.

(g) *Visha Nashaka Makshika* $\xrightarrow{\text{Agni Samskar}}$ *Vishibhavati*

This example showing how *Samskara* can be harmful, if not properly used in proper substance. Honey which is antitoxic by nature becomes toxic substance after *Agni Samskara* (If heated).

Thus, these are some of the examples of *Samskara Vishesha*.

2) *Svabhava Vishesha*

Dadhi $\xrightarrow{\text{Manthan Samskar}}$ Takra & Navaneeta

Here *Dadhi* which is *Snigdha* and *Shophakara*, after *Manthana Samskara* forms 2 substances: *Takra* and *Navaneeta*. Both are *Snigdha* but not *Shophakara*. Here the reason given by *Indu* as *Svabhava Vishesha*. But the reason lies in *Samskara* only, as *Manthana Samskara* is done, some amount of *Agni* is produced in the process due to *Manthana*, which changes *Abhisyandi* and *Guru Dadhi* into *Anabhisyandi* and *Laghu Takra*.

3) *Samskara Svabhava*

Here *Indu* has given example of *Samskarita* and *Asamskarita Takra*. In diseases like *Peenasa* etc. *Samskarita Takra* is only useful, *Asamskarita* is not useful. *Indu* tells it as *Samskara Svabhava*. But it is not that much clear. According to *Panchamahabhuta Siddhanta*, it can be said that *Vayu Mahabhuta* dominance responsible for *Shita Sparsha* in *Takra* gets reduced and *Agni Mahabhuta* dominance increased comparatively, after *Agni Samskara* which is useful in diseases like *Peenasa*, having *Vata Dosha* dominance.

4) *Avastha Vishesha*

Ksheera $\xrightarrow[\text{Kala Samskara}]{\text{Avasthantaram}}$ Dadhi Ghrita

Ajaata Dadhi \rightarrow Takra

(*Kashayam - Grahi*)

(*Amla - Bhedan*)

Here, *Ksheera* is forming different substances according to different *Samskaras*. i.e., *Ksheera (Madhura, Sara, Seeta)* is getting transformed into *Dadhi (Amla, Grahi, Ushna)* by *Kala Samskara*, having exactly different properties. Again, after *Agni Samskara*, it is getting converted into *Ghee*, which is *Ksheera Sadrsam* i.e., *Madhura, Seeta*, etc. Again, the by-product formed in the process is *Takra*, having different properties than *Dadhi*. So, here it is termed as *Avastha Vishesha* of the same substance as it is

exhibiting different properties according to different *Avastha*.

5) *Patra Vishesha*

Draksha $\xrightarrow{\text{Kept in Lohapatra}}$ Draksha

(*Madhura, Vatapittahara*) (*Amlatvam, Tridosakaram*)

It is also important that *Patra* used for keeping *Bheshaja* should be such that there should be enhancement of properties of *Bheshaja*. The example mentioned above for *Patra Visesa* is indicative of this fact only. When *Draksha* is kept in *Patra* made up of iron, it induces mild chemical reaction, thereby increasing sourness and *Tridosha Karatva* in *Draksha*. As *madhura Draksha* is getting converted to *Amla*, it can be said that *Prthvi* and *Jala mahabhuta* dominance is getting changed to *Prthivi* and *Agni mahabhuta* dominance disturbing the natural *Pancabhautika Sanghatana* of *Draksha* making it *Tridoshakara*. In *Caraka Samhita*, it is termed as *Bhajana Samskara*.

6) *Kriya Vishesha*

Sali $\xrightarrow[\text{Peshana Samskara}]{\text{Pishta Samskar}}$ Svabhavaguru Godhumat Api
Adhikam Gurutvam Yati

Here, *Sali* which is *Laghu* by nature becomes more *Guru* than *Svabhava Guru Godhuma* after *Peshana Samskara*. After *Peshana Samskara*, *Vayu Mahabhuta* dominance gets reduced and *Jala Mahabhuta* dominance increases making it *Guru*.

7) *Kriya Svabhava Vishesha*

Tila \rightarrow Khal Taila

Tila is *Shleshmakara*, but *Khala Taila* made up of *Tila* is *Aslesmakara*. This is due to *Kriya Svabhava Vishesha*. Here *Prithvi* dominance in *Tila* is getting reduced after making *Khala Taila*.

Rakta Shali $\xrightarrow[\text{Bharjana Samskara}]{\text{Kuttana samskara}}$ Prithuka

Rakta Sali which is *Laghu* by nature, after *Bhrishta* gets converted into *Prthuka* which is *Guru*. It is similar to *Kriya Svabhavavishesha* i.e., it is *Svabhavavishesha* of this *Kriya* (Process) which is responsible for this

transformation. Here also *Vayu Mahabhuta* dominance in *Rakta Sali* decreases and *Prithvi* and *Jala Mahabhuta* dominance increases in the process thereby making *Prthuka Guru*.

8) Kriya Prayoga Vishesha

Candanasya Lepa → *Slaskna, Suska, Ghana - Dahakara*
Aguro Lepa → *Parusa, Ardra, Tanu - Seetakrta*

Candana having *Shitaveerya* is showing *Dahakara* effect, if applied on the body in *Shlakshna, Shushka*, and *Ghana* form. Whereas, *Aguru* which is *Ushna Virya*, shows *Shitakrita* (Cooling) effect, if applied on the body in *Parusha, Ardra* and *Tanu* form. So, here *Kriya Prayoga* i.e., method of application is showing this difference. But this example is showing more relevance to *Samyoga* rather than *Samskara*.

9) Kriya Samyoga Vishesha

Guda + Dadhi = Rasala

After *Samyoga* of *Dadhi* and *Guda* (both *Guru*), the resultant formed *Rasala* is *Atigurutara* i.e., showing more grade of heaviness than expected. This is termed as *Kriya Samyoga Vishesha* by *Indu*.

10) Samyoga Samskara Vishesha

Guda + Toya = Panakam

This example is again showing the similarity with above example of *Kriya Samyoga Vishesha*. But *Indu* termed it as *Samyoga Samskara Vishesha*.

11) Samskara Kala Vishesha

Guda + Water = Madya

Guda + Water = Sukta

Dhataki, Guda and water when combined and kept together, it is *Samskara* and *Kala* that decides whether it will be *Madya* or *Sukta*. So, it is considered under *Samskara Kala Vishesha* by *Indu*.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it is clear that *Samskara* is an important aspect of changes of attributes in any *Dravya*. *Karya-Dravyas* are constantly changing as a result of the presence of *Agni Mahabhuta*. Depending

on the amount of *Agni Mahabhuta* present in a substance, the rate of transformation might be either slow or fast. In *Samskara*, the rate of transformation is simply increased up by the application of different techniques. For practical understanding, the word "*Gunantaradhana*" has been used in *Samskara*. Because of the '*Samavaya*' connection that exists between *Karana-Dravya* and *Guna*, *Gunantaradhana* indicates *Dravyantradhana*. *Bhummyadinam Gunaihi* is representative of the *Mahabhutas'* *Gunas*. i.e., *Karana Dravyas* are only having the relationship of *Samavaya*. *Samskara* and *Samyoga* are very similar to one another. The quantity of the substances involved in the *Samskara* and *Samyoga* processes that creates the difference. *Samskara* and *Samyoga* are very similar to one another. The quantity of the substances involved in the *Samskara* and *Samyoga* processes that creates the difference. In *Samyoga*, the substances are in dominant quantity. While in *Samskara*, *Samskaraka Dravya* is less in quantity. It is essential for *Ayurvedists* to fully understand the concept of *Samskara* and the fundamental ideas behind it given that understanding so can allow them to utilise a single drug in multiple ways as needed. As drug availability keeps decreasing daily, this knowledge is becoming more and more important. The other 3 *Padas* of *Bhesaja - Bahuta, Yogyatva*, and *Sampat* can all be increased or improved by *Samskara*, according to *Ayurvedic* medicine.

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